



Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: June 10, 2020.

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:06 PM.

Location: Conducted via Remote Participation (Zoom).

Minutes.

Members in Attendance: Daniel Amstutz, Aravind Basavapathruni, Ky Bertoli, Lenard Diggins, Chuck Giroux, Melissa Laube, Jeff Maxtutis, Howard Muise, Tycho Nightingale, Scott Smith, Laura Swan.

Members Missing: Corey Rateau, Wayne Chouinard.

Members of Public in Attendance: Alison Piasecki, Galen Mook, Judith Proctor, Linda Epstein, Paul Schlichtman, Arthur Prokosch, Jo Anne Preston, Phil Goff, Brian Ristuccia, Mark Foster.

1. Administration.

The Chair (Howard Muise) read the script for remotely conducted meetings, referred the members to the agenda attachment entitled "Governor Charles Baker's 3/12/2020 Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law", and announced that the meeting was being recorded. The minutes of the May 19, 2020 meeting were approved by roll call vote with two amendments by Daniel Amstutz and Scott Smith.

2. Appointment: MBTA Advisory Board

TAC has recommended Lenard Diggins to the Select Board for nomination as Arlington's representative on the MBTA Advisory Board.

3. Town Issues/Activities

a. Daniel Amstutz, Department of Community Planning and Development (DCPD).

Efforts to assist the Town's economic recovery from the pandemic continue. The Town is looking at options for outdoor dining to support restaurants due to capacity restrictions for indoor dining in Phase 2 of the reopening. Parking spots in selected areas will be allowed to be used for outdoor dining. Zones for food pickup will be designated.

A survey was initiated to capture public comfort with reopening various activities (~800 responses to date). Development of a mobile parking payment option is still in progress and may be initiated when the Town starts charging for parking meters again. They have been shut off for most of the state of emergency. A bicycle/pedestrian count at Mass Ave/Appleton St. will be initiated to provide information for developing improvement plans.

4. Shared Street Pilot (Daniel Amstutz)

A week long pilot was executed on Brooks Avenue May 20-27. It was well received (~200 survey responses, >75% positive) and DCPD will investigate an expansion of the shared street concept beyond the one week pilot and to additional locations.

5. Arlington High School (Howard Muise)

A revised Traffic Impact and Analysis Study (TIAS) for Arlington High School (AHS) was sent to TAC from the Town Manager who asked TAC to review it. The AHS working group will respond with comments. Arthur Prokosch raised a question about the absence of the bicycle connection between the school and Minuteman Bikeway. Muise stated the path remains in the design, but funding was removed from the building budget during the cost engineering review. The Town appears committed to providing the connection if building costs are lower than projected. If not, the Town will need to find another source of funding.

6. Appleton St/Appleton Pl/Mass Ave (Howard Muise)

Muise informed TAC that the Select Board approved establishing a design review committee to study both short-term and long-term improvements at the intersection and also approved a memorial to Charles Proctor, the bicyclist killed at this intersection on May 5, 2020. The committee will include representatives of TAC; ABAC; the Planning, Police and Public Works Departments; a local business; St. Athanasius Church; and three members of the public. Muise indicated he suggested adding a representative of the Ottoson School.

Linda Epstein (resident) inquired about the process for adding residents to the committee. Muise responded that he did not know what was planned but assumed the Town would advertise for the resident members.

Galen Mook (resident in Allston and Executive Director of MassBike) was pleased with the prompt response by Select Board. Phil Goff (resident) was also pleased with the prompt response by Select Board

and developed an initial set of sketches of possible short-term improvements to help with traffic, bicycle and pedestrian safety. Thomas Proctor (brother of Charles Proctor) stated he was pleased that design changes are in review and the speed with which the review has been undertaken.

Muise addressed the question of potentially changing the flashing pedestrian signal to a traffic signal. The current signal was permitted as a pedestrian signal in 1967. It would require a redesign of the signal and entirely new equipment to provide a traffic control signal.

7. Thompson School Traffic Calming (Scott Smith)

The working group is reviewing past history, crash results, and streets plan. The group plans to meet with Thompson School Principal to discuss arrival and dismissal and transportation concerns raised by the community. Their review will include considering concerns raised by residents about traffic calming with the reconstruction Lussiano Playground.

8. Chestnut St. Traffic (Daniel Amstutz)

Amstutz reviewed two options for addressing pedestrian safety issues at the intersection of Chestnut St. and Mystic St. and on Chestnut St. near Chestnut Terr. that were developed by Town Engineer Wayne Chouinard for discussion. They included: 1) add curb bump outs on the Chestnut St. crosswalk at Chestnut Terrace to decrease pedestrian crossing distance and 2) remove Chestnut St. crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. (too close to Mystic St. signalized intersection) and add curb bump outs on the Chestnut St. crosswalk at Medford St. Ky Bertoli suggested "flashing lights" at the crosswalk at Chestnut Terr. Jeff Maxtutis responded that drivers may look beyond the flashing lights and see the traffic signals at Mystic St. As a result they may not react appropriately to the flashing signal. Bertoli also suggested road traffic calming bumps. Phil Goff (resident) suggested consideration of a raised crosswalk and/or refuge island to calm traffic. He mentioned the FHWA Pedestrian Safety countermeasures report that pointed to the effectiveness of refuge islands. Brian Ristuccia (resident) suggested implementation of elements both of Chouinard's options without removing any crosswalks; he reminded meeting members of the elderly community living in the vicinity of the intersection and the dangers for the elderly of crossing Chestnut St. to reach churches, the library, Town Hall and retail businesses in the Town Center. Jo Anne Preston (resident) added that 100 residents of Chestnut Terrace are senior citizens and many are afraid to cross Chestnut St.

A two step process was suggested: make the existing crossing safer for now and examine all three crosswalks on Chestnut St. and Chestnut St. itself for longer-term improvements. Phil Goff encouraged all to observe the crossing in Medford near Brooks School as an example of good design. Paul Schlichtman (resident) added his concerns about the current design and operation of the crosswalk across Chestnut St. at Mystic St. It requires multiple phases of the signal to be able to completely cross Chestnut St. He suggested redesign of the intersection to eliminate the high speed right-turn lanes which he feels are not appropriate in an urban and congested area. Preston added that a resident in the area should be added to the working group – Paul Schlichtman was suggested.

Howard Muise noted that TAC working groups occasionally include members who are not members of TAC and the suggestion will be considered for this review.

Lenard Diggins was curious about criteria for establishing an Appleton St./Mass Ave. design review committee and providing a prompt review compared with the response to the fatality at Chestnut St. Amstutz noted that the crash at Appleton St and Mass Ave has come under higher scrutiny most likely due to significant public outcry, for better or worse. The Town does not have a rapid response process to quickly address transportation safety incidents like this.

9. Appleton Street at Park Ave (Jeff Maxtutis)

TAC is considering a recommendation to install a traffic signal at the intersection to address safety concerns with Appleton St. traffic trying to cross or turn onto Park Ave. Because of reduced traffic volumes due to the pandemic, the review has slowed. A short-term fix under consideration is modification of the signal timing at Park Ave. and Florence St. to provide more green time to Florence St. traffic. This might provide larger gaps in traffic on Park Ave to help drivers or pedestrians crossing Park Ave at the unsignalized approach of Appleton St. to Park Ave.

10. Crosswalk on Academy St. at Maple St. – no update; Corey Rateau not present

11. Mass Ave. Crosswalks at Water St, Town Hall and Academy St (Jeff Maxtutis)

Safety assessments are ongoing.

12. Parking and Traffic Direction on Bartlett Ave (Daniel Amstutz)

Rateau, Maxtutis and Amstutz met with residents in early 2020 and reviewed existing parking regulations on Bartlett Ave. It was found that in some locations there was no signing in place where parking restrictions were in effect. Signing was installed to reflect existing parking restrictions and this was found to substantially address traffic flow issues raised by residents. There has been good compliance on southbound Bartlett with the newly marked areas. An additional 1-2 spots of “no parking” on southbound Bartlett St. would further help the situation. It appears that Whole Foods Market employees have been parking on Bartlett St. because previous parking at CVS for WF employees is no longer available.

TAC adopted a recommendation to the Select Board to designate an additional one or two parking spots as “no parking” areas on southbound Bartlett Ave.

13. Public Schools (Laura Swan)

Laura Swan noted that school attendance in fall 2020 may be restricted to half-attendance. Mechanisms for managing half-attendance with the pandemic are still unclear. This may or may not affect usual traffic patterns during the school year.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 9:06.